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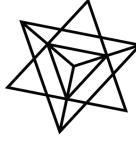
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- Consume fermented food.
- Time restricted eating
- Consistency is the key





Love's Transformative Power

February invites us to celebrate the incredible strength and wisdom of the heart—a symbol of love, resilience and vitality. This month is an opportunity to explore what truly nourishes us and to recognize the transformative power of love in all its forms.

Transformation begins with intention. Whether it's making healthier choices, cultivating deeper connections, or simply taking time to appreciate life's small joys, the heart is at the center of it all. When we listen to our hearts—truly tune into their rhythm—we gain clarity, purpose, and the energy to grow into our best selves.

Love, in all its forms, is vital to our well-being. Whether it's the love we share with a partner, family, friends, or even ourselves, it serves as a foundation for our health and happiness. Studies continue to show that love and connection boost immunity, reduce stress and contribute to a longer life. But beyond the scientific benefits, love enriches our souls, providing strength and courage as we navigate life's challenges.

Heart health is not only physical, but emotional and spiritual as well. Acts of love and care, whether directed inward or outward, strengthen the bond between our minds and bodies. They remind us that self-care is not selfish; it's a vital step in becoming the source of strength and kindness for others.

Transformation often starts quietly, with small, intentional choices. Whether it's prioritizing heart-healthy habits, cultivating gratitude, or simply pausing to breathe and reflect, these moments of care have the power to ripple through our lives in profound ways.

Let's step into this month with open hearts; let's consider the ways we can harness the power of love and transformation. Perhaps it's by setting aside quiet moments to reflect on what makes our heart happiest or by embracing small, but meaningful lifestyle changes that support long-term health.

Every positive action—no matter how small—creates ripples that can uplift those around us.

With love and heartfelt gratitude,

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Contents

10
The Thriving Heart



13
Healing Power of Hugs

14
Anil Gupta

16
Chocolate Champions



20
Stretching for Heart Health

22
Holistic Lifestyle for Dogs

Departments

6 News Briefs
8 Health Briefs
10 Feature Story
13 Inspiration

14 Wise Words
16 Conscious Eating
20 Fit Body
22 Natural Pet

24 Calendar
28 Resource Guide



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Best Prep for Pregnancy: Online Event and Expo Offers Fertility Guidance

Helping couples make informed decisions about their reproductive health, Best Prep for Pregnancy is a five-day online event and expo from March 25 through 29, featuring more than 30 experts and exhibitors. Attendees will gain insights into the root causes of female and male infertility, and learn about a whole-health approach to optimal fertility that protects parents and their babies. This immersive conference will offer a wealth of vital tips and solutions for those trying to conceive naturally or with the help of *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) or egg freezing.

"Combining traditional and modern medicine offers a holistic approach to fertility, enhancing the chances of conception," says event host Dr. Susan Fox, a specialist in reproductive health with more than 23 years of experience. She will be joined by other notable speakers, including Dr. Sarah Green, a leading advocate for integrative fertility methods, and Dr. James Patel, a specialist in egg freezing and IVF technologies.

Sponsored by KnowWell and *Natural Awakenings* magazine, the event will include individual talks, interactive workshops and exhibitor presentations. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with professionals, ask questions and connect with others on similar journeys.

For more information or to register, visit BestPrep4Pregnancy.com. See ad page 25.

Angelic Mediumship Provides Healing and Guidance

Dominique Lavoisier, owner of Mediumship with Angels LLC, shares a remarkable journey into the world of angelic mediumship, a practice that not only transformed his life, but now empowers others. Following a period of intense personal stress, Lavoisier discovered the calming and restorative power of connecting with angels through a specialized mediumship course. His transformative experience led him to establish Mediumship with Angels, offering remote readings designed to help clients achieve clarity, healing and connection.

Lavoisier's mediumship focuses on angelic energies, facilitating messages from loved ones who have passed on and providing personalized guidance for his clients' life paths. His sessions have brought closure, encouragement and clarity to individuals seeking support in



Dr. Susan Fox

various areas, from career decisions to personal healing. A client seeking a message from a departed father was deeply moved by the precise and empathetic communication facilitated by Lavoisier, reflecting the depth of his connection and skill.



In March, Lavoisier will introduce oracle readings, which incorporate higher-dimensional energies to offer additional insights and support. His clients have described their experiences as uplifting and helpful, with many expressing gratitude for the unique and loving energy that characterizes his sessions.

Location: Florida-based, all readings are done remotely. To make an appointment or for more information, email MediumshipWithAngels@yahoo.com or visit MediumshipWithAngels.com. See ad page 15.

Massage School for Sale in Ann Arbor: A Unique Opportunity to Continue a Legacy

Mary Light, ND, MH, LMT, announces the sale of a thriving massage school that has served the community for 16 years with a Michigan state-licensed program. This opportunity includes the permits, established curriculum, core equipment and the intellectual property required for a seamless transition.



Available through June 30, this sale would allow the new owner to step into an accredited institution and begin enrolling students immediately. Buyers are free to change the school's name or relocate it, offering flexibility to make it their own. Additionally, Light is committed to supporting the new owner with curriculum guidance, ensuring continued excellence in massage education. The clinic income associated with the school also transfers, providing financial stability to the new proprietor.

"This is more than a business; it's a legacy," Light emphasizes. "The new owner can build on this foundation and inspire the next generation of healing professionals."

As Goethe aptly stated, "Whatever you can do, or dream you

can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now." This moment presents a bold opportunity to continue a mission of wellness and education in Southeast Michigan and beyond.

Location: Ann Arbor, Michigan. For more information, call Mary Light at 734-769-7794. See ad page 29.

Steiner Health Combines Medicine with Spiritual Wellness

Steiner Health, a nonprofit organization founded in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1997, continues to redefine health care with a focus on anthroposophic medicine. By integrating alternative and complementary medical practices, Steiner Health provides comprehensive, holistic care designed to support the physical and spiritual well-being of its patients.

The organization offers a unique healthcare model that combines patient care, education and research. Its outpatient office practices anthroposophic medicine, blending traditional internal medicine with therapies aimed at nurturing the whole person. The Rudolf Steiner Health Center, the only inpatient anthroposophic medical center in the United States, offers specialized care inspired by leading hospitals in Germany.

Steiner Health is committed to making holistic health care financially accessible while maintaining a focus on environmental and social responsibility. Its direct care model fosters a community-based approach, allowing patients to participate in a collective that redefines the economic relationship to health care.

Location: 1825 W. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-222-1491 or visit SteinerHealth.org.

Holistic Approaches Enhance Pet Health and Recovery

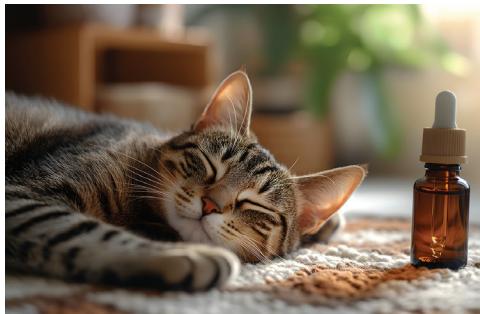
Pet owners looking for a natural approach to veterinary care can now access specialized holistic therapies at Animal Urgent Center, in Ann Arbor. The center offers acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine and veterinary medical manipulation (chiropractic care) to enhance the health and well-being of pets through integrative and personalized treatments.

Led by Dr. Kate Gunasekaran, these therapies address a variety of conditions, including pain management, mobility issues and chronic illnesses, helping pets heal and thrive. By combining traditional veterinary expertise with holistic practices, the center delivers compre-



hensive care tailored to the unique needs of each pet.

Animal Urgent Center emphasizes compassionate care and transparency, allowing owners to stay with their pets during visits. This family-owned practice also streamlines the experience with convenient online check-ins, ensuring stress-free access to top-quality veterinary services.



Location: 215 N Maple Rd., Ste. A-1, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-531-7540 or visit AnimalUrgentCenter.com.

Suicide Prevention Programs Expand

Garrett's Space is expanding its transformative mental health programs for young adults, fueled by support from the 2025 Washtenaw County Community Mental Health and Public Safety Preservation Millage. This funding empowers the nonprofit to enhance its services and address a growing crisis among young people.



In Michigan, suicide is a leading cause of death for individuals ages 15 to 34. Garrett's Space confronts this issue through free virtual support groups and wellness programming that foster connection and community. With renewed millage funding, the organization will increase in-person wellness activities and support groups while developing day programming at its upcoming residential campus.

"We are immensely grateful to Washtenaw County and its voters," says Scott Halpert, president and co-founder of Garrett's Space. "This funding allows us to provide crucial resources to more young adults and expand behavioral health services in our community."

Renewed for an eight-year term in November 2024, the millage will sustain essential behavioral health services through 2034. The overwhelming voter support demonstrates a collective commitment to addressing mental health challenges and creating a brighter future for young adults in need.

Location: 1234 Main St., Ann Arbor, Michigan. For more information, call 734-123-4567 or visit GarrettsSpace.org.



GLP-1 for Heart Health, Diabetes and More

GLP-1 receptor agonist medications, including Ozempic, Wegovy and Mounjaro, are gaining recognition for their health benefits beyond weight loss. Originally developed to manage Type 2 diabetes and regulate blood sugar levels, these medications are now

celebrated for their ability to promote significant, safe and sustained weight loss. This discovery has led to a deeper understanding of how these drugs can improve overall health.

Studies have highlighted that GLP-1 agonists reduce risks of serious conditions like heart attack, stroke and chronic kidney disease. They also demonstrate the potential to improve cholesterol and triglyceride levels, combat fatty liver disease and lower the risk of dementia. Fascinatingly, early research suggests that these medications may even reduce addiction tendencies and the risks associated with some cancers.

Incorporating these treatments into a health regimen, alongside balanced nutrition and consistent physical activity, offers a holistic approach to achieving wellness. For example, modest weight loss paired with GLP-1 medications can improve health markers dramatically. According to recent research published in *Science*, GLP-1 medications show promising advancements in addressing multiple chronic conditions safely and effectively.

Location: 1226 Michigan Ave., East Lansing. To make an appointment or for more information, call 517-333-7270 or visit WycoffWellness.com. See ad on back cover.



Holistic Ways to Boost Cardiovascular Health

February serves as a powerful reminder to prioritize heart health, a cornerstone of overall well-being. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) remains the leading cause of death in the United States, emphasizing the importance of preventive care and holistic management

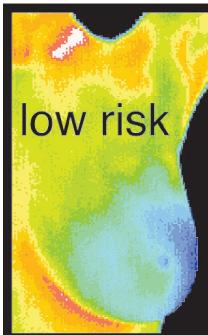
strategies. While many factors contribute to CVD—including high blood pressure, inflammation and stress—integrative therapies can offer effective support.

Acupuncture, an ancient Chinese practice, is scientifically shown to promote circulation, regulate blood pressure and improve heart rhythm by engaging the parasympathetic nervous system. A 2022 study in *Nature Reviews Cardiology* highlights acupuncture's ability to improve vagal tone, reducing cardiovascular risks.

Low-level light therapy (LLLT), also known as photobiomodulation, uses red and near-infrared light to target inflammation and enhance mitochondrial health—vital elements for a healthy heart. Research indicates this therapy can reduce systemic inflammation, a critical factor in many heart conditions.

Massage therapy and craniosacral therapy also play pivotal roles in cardiovascular care. By lowering cortisol levels and enhancing blood flow, these treatments address stress, a key contributor to heart disease. Complementing these therapies with heart-supportive nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids, CoQ10 and magnesium, further fortifies cardiovascular resilience.

Location: 644 Migaldi Ln., Ste. 300, Lansing. For more information, call 517-388-1507 or visit SolaraWellness.net.



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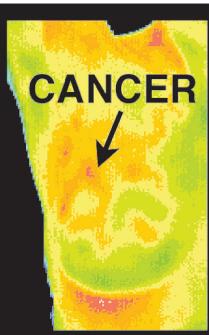
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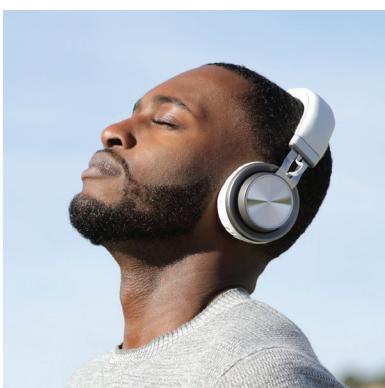


Long-Term Health of Cesarean Babies

According to the March of Dimes, nearly a third of live births in the United States are by Cesarean section (C-section), posing increased risks of health problems such as obesity, Type 2 diabetes, asthma and allergies. Scientists suspect that the lack of exposure to the micro-

organisms in the mother's vagina during birth may be the reason. Vaginal seeding by wiping a newborn's skin, nose and mouth with the mother's vaginal microbes can make the skin and gut microbiome of C-section infants more similar to vaginally delivered babies, but the long-term impacts on health have not been determined.

A study on mice published in the journal *Cell* may be the first evidence of the positive effect of vaginal seeding on metabolic health. The researchers found that mice that received fecal transplants from babies exposed to vaginal seeding had more diverse microbiomes a few weeks after the transplant. In addition, male mice that received fecal transplants from babies exposed to vaginal seeding had less abdominal fat than male mice with transplants from babies not exposed to vaginal seeding. Increased abdominal fat has been linked to increased risks of obesity, Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.



Binaural Beats To Lower Anxiety

A binaural beat is an auditory illusion created by the brain when two different tones are played in each ear simultaneously, creating the perception of a third tone. Listening to binaural beats may help train the mind to increase creativity, enter a meditative state, reduce anxiety or improve mental focus.

A Turkish study published in the *Journal of Integrative and Complementary Medicine* investigated the effect of using binaural beats with patients undergoing a sedation-free upper gastrointestinal endoscopy.

Forty-eight patients in the binaural beats group wore headphones and listened to music 15 minutes before the endoscopy, and the control group of 48 patients was given no pre-procedure treatment. The binaural beats group experienced significantly lower anxiety and better tolerated the endoscopy procedure than the control group.

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9



The Thriving Heart

Integrative Approaches to Cardiology

by Carrie Jackson

Although only the size of a fist, our hearts pump blood to our organs and supply oxygen and nutrients to our cells, allowing every system to function optimally. Maintaining a healthy heart is one of the most important factors for overall wellness, and cardiovascular disease is highly preventable. Integrative cardiology, which focuses on treating the whole person rather than just the heart, reflects a shift toward more individualized, patient-centered care. Using personalized nutrition, expansive blood testing, advanced therapies and holistic practices, doctors and patients can blend the best of traditional and integrative strategies for a more balanced and effective approach to heart health.

The 100-Year Heart

Dr. Jack Wolfson is a board-certified cardiologist, bestselling author and founder of the site *NaturalHeartDoctor.com*. He pioneered the 100-year heart method, which focuses on what he calls “thrival” nutrition, lifestyle, biohacking and ultra-diagnostics to lead a life filled with vitality, clarity and longevity. “Our approach is root-cause medicine, which puts pharma last,” he explains. “By looking at daily habits and lifestyle choices, we are able to see why people develop cardiovascular disease, which is the number one killer worldwide.”

Wolfson notes that cardiovascular health begins by giving the heart the nutrition it

needs to thrive. “Food is medicine, and a paleo-based diet like our ancestors followed has been shown to optimize heart function,” he says. “I recommend patients focus on eating wild seafood and pasture-raised meats such as bison, including organs like the heart and liver. This is supplemented by foraging for things like eggs, raw dairy, nuts, seeds, avocados, coconuts and other fruits and vegetables.”

How we live has a dramatic effect on heart health, and Wolfson asserts that there are a number of lifestyle factors we can control. “A thrival lifestyle centers around being outside in natural sunlight and participating in activities we enjoy. When combined



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with a positive mindset and high-quality sleep, these practices increase longevity and contribute to a deeper sense of meaning and fulfillment," he says. "It's also essential to avoid environmental toxins, such as air pollution, plastic and indoor pollutants like mold from water damage, to the best of your ability. Finally, managing stress and getting movement throughout your day are key to optimal cardiovascular function."

A truly holistic approach to wellness combines many interrelated tools. "Find an activity you love to do outside, whether that's hiking, biking, stand-up paddleboarding or yoga. Before you begin, turn your attention inward and think of three things you are grateful for," Wolfson advises. "This gratitude practice helps you find your happy place, and it gives you a sense of purpose in a world where that's becoming increasingly difficult. It engages the autonomic nervous system, which controls functions like heart rate and blood pressure."

Wolfson believes that for a healthy mind, body and heart, a chiropractor should be the gatekeeper to overall wellness. "Chiropractic care uses the manipulations of bones in a purposeful way to make impactful changes to the neurologic system. It sends out beneficial, efferent signals to all of the cells, tissues and organs, including the heart. It also helps to get us out of the 'fight-flight-or-freeze' mode that so many people are operating in," he remarks. "Chronic stress from work, family, news and finances keeps the sympathetic nervous system activated, but chiropractic treatments help stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, which allows us to rest and digest."

To kickstart heart health even further, Wolfson's 100-year heart method uses thrival biohacking methods such as supplements and non-surgical recovery therapies. "Evidence-based, food-grade supplements from field-harvested animals and wild fish support heart function without chemicals or pharmaceuticals," he points out. "People

also may need additional minerals like magnesium, herbal remedies, probiotics or detox strategies if they've been living around pollutants. Non-invasive technologies like red light therapy, sauna use, massage, ozone therapy and other cutting-edge treatments help to hack our system and support a healthy heart."

Treating the Whole Person

Dr. Mimi Guarneri is a California-based cardiologist; the medical director of Pacific Pearl La Jolla; an award-winning researcher, consultant and philanthropist; and president of the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine. In her practice, she combines conventional, integrative and natural medicine to holistically treat the whole patient.

Guarneri says that while cardiovascular disease is still largely misunderstood, it is also highly preventable. "People think it's a disease of cholesterol, but it's actually due to inflammation, oxidative stress and immune response," she explains. "Inflammation can come from obesity, stress, sleep apnea, poor food choices and food sensitivities, and that is what causes damage to the lining of the blood vessels. In the conventional medicine realm, that means telling patients to stop smoking, lose weight and get blood pressure and cholesterol under control. From a holistic perspective, we look at all the lifestyle factors that contribute to heart health."

When treating a patient with heart disease, Guarneri uses the metaphor of a tree with sick branches. "Instead of just cutting them off, you have to look at the soil to see what can be causing the illness. The soil of our lives includes micro- and macro-nutrition, a healthy microbiome, avoiding toxins, high-quality sleep, physical activity and mental, emotional and spiritual wellness. All these factors contribute to healthy heart function," she says.

Guarneri uses advanced testing to assess a patient's baseline heart health. "We begin with a blood and urine micronutrient

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analysis, which measures the level of antioxidants and nutrients in the body. Then we conduct a microbiome analysis, which is a three-day stool test that shows how someone is digesting their food. We can see every type of microbe, any parasites and if there is dysbiosis [imbalance] or bacteria overgrowth. Finally, we conduct an in-home study on sleep, which is an integral part of cardiovascular health. Someone with sleep apnea can snore and stop breathing, putting them at increased risk for heart disease, heart failure and high blood pressure," she says.

Advanced cardiovascular testing shows additional valuable data. "An EndoPAT tells us if the lining of the blood vessels is making nitric oxide, the most important ingredient for heart health. This is a 40-minute, in-office procedure that does not require radiation. Since cardiovascular disease is an inflammatory disease, we do advanced lipid testing to measure inflammatory markers. A high-sensitivity C-reactive protein test measures the level of C-reactive protein in your blood to assess your risk of heart disease and stroke. A 24-hour blood pressure cuff tells us what's happening throughout

the day, and a continuous glucose monitor shows how blood sugar reacts to foods. It's also valuable feedback to the patient, who can see how their body responds to what they're ingesting," says Guarneri.

With all this data, the team creates a road map to health. "We make recommendations based on each patient's individual needs, including supplements, food choices and lifestyle modifications," she says. "I may suggest nutraceuticals to complete something that's missing, such as vitamin D, or I may use them to treat a problem. We'll prescribe omega-3 [fatty acids] if your triglycerides are high, but we're also going to give you a low glycemic index diet."

Guarneri works with patients to manage stress through mindfulness, meditation, exercise and other lifestyle choices. "If you are in constant 'fight-or-flight' mode, you are producing adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol, which cause blood pressure to go up, the coronary arteries to constrict, cholesterol to increase and oxidative stress to develop," she explains.

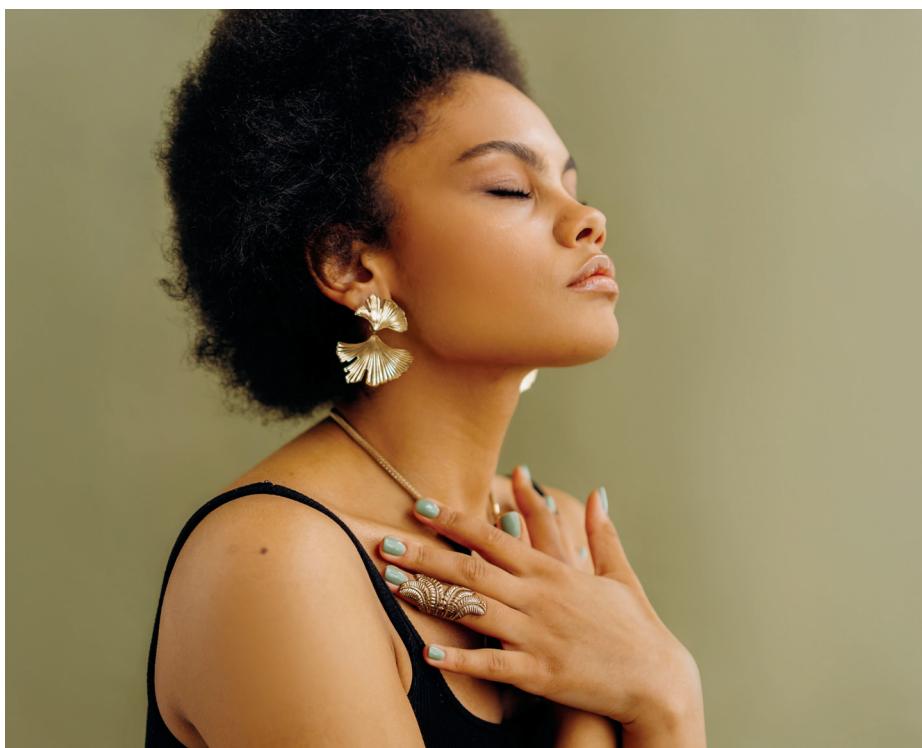
Guarneri points to a study involving Black Americans with hypertension that showed a 48 percent reduction in cardiovascular events through the use of transcendental meditation. "Mindfulness has also been shown to improve telomeres, telomerase and other genes of aging. Making conscious decisions in our behavior in response to stress is key to overall wellness and cardiovascular function. If your habit is to go home and have a drink after a hard day, we encourage patients to put on their tennis shoes and take a walk instead," she says.

The Future of Cardiology

New advancements in cardiology are made all the time. In the coming year, cardiologists and researchers are expected to dig deeper into lipid disorders, obesity management and RNA-based therapies for conditions like cardiac amyloidosis, heart failure, dilated cardiomyopathy and hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. We can also expect to see an increase of awareness and interest in the role lipidology [the study of lipids or fatty acids] has on cardiovascular disease. "Preventive cardiologists and clinical lipidologists like myself have been checking Lp(a) levels for well over two decades now, but there has been little we could do medically to reduce high levels," says Yasmine S. Ali, MD, MSCI, FACC, FACP, adding that a number of nucleic acid therapeutic trials suggest this may change soon.

Experts stress that despite technological treatment advancements, preventative care is still the most effective way to ensure cardiovascular health. "Everyday lifestyle choices have the biggest impact on overall wellness and living a life of vitality, clarity and longevity," says Wolfson.

Carrie Jackson is a Chicago-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to Natural Awakenings. Connect at CarrieJacksonWrites.com.





Healing Power of Hugs

by Marlaina Donato

I have learned that there is more power in a good strong hug than in a thousand meaningful words,” wrote American novelist Ann Hood, and her words ring true for many of us. When in the arms of a loved one, we share the heartbeat of the present moment. Spiritual traditions provide manifold forms of meditative practices, but embracing another human being might be the most enjoyable way to achieve a deep state of calm and mindfulness.

Hugs can mark beginnings, tethering two lives in committed union, or they can punctuate endings when we say goodbye. When we are sick or grieving, allowing someone to gather us in their safe embrace is strong medicine.



Ketut Subiyanto from Pexels/Canva Pro

Science tells us that hugging tames our stress response, bolsters the immune system and helps children to better cope with life later in adulthood. Our arms are energetic extensions of the heart, and welcoming someone into a circle of security is the body’s act of prayer, engaging the emotions and soothing the soul.

Despite all the good a hug might offer, past trauma or inhibition can prevent us from benefiting from this human need for touch. Asking someone, “May I give you a hug?” is a good place to begin, and so, too, making the decision to receive someone else’s affectionate gesture. For those without loved ones nearby, therapeutic massage, playing with a pet or clutching a favorite stuffed animal can kick off a similar cascade of feel-good chemicals when we are overwhelmed.

Hugging can be part of our daily spiritual wellness practice, an investment that goes beyond ourselves and into the world, one embrace at a time. Here are a few ideas to get the ripple effect going:

- Hug your partner without sexual agenda and connect heart-to-heart.
- Hug your child during happy times, not only on challenging days.
- Ask for a hug; initiation is a sign of strength, not neediness.
- Hold a hug for at least 20 seconds.

Marlaina Donato is an author, visionary painter and composer. Connect at WildflowersAndWoodsmoke.com.

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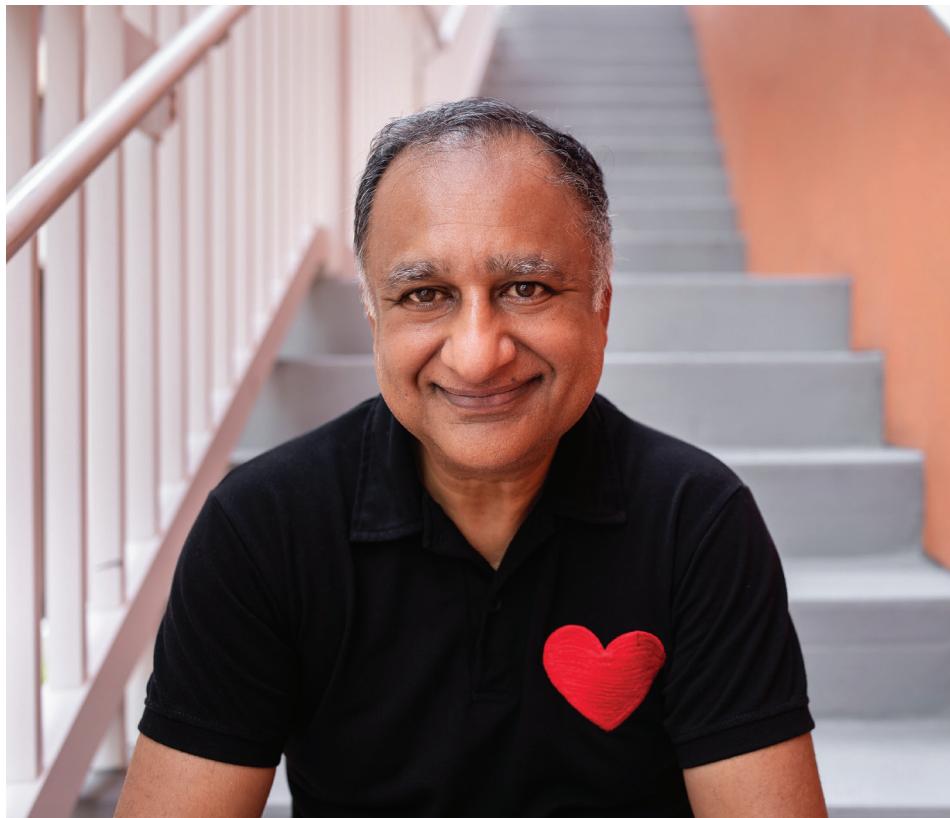




Anil Gupta

on Immediate Happiness

by Sandra Yeyati



Known as the Love Doctor, Anil Gupta is an international public speaker, life coach, relationship mentor and bestselling author of *Immediate Happiness*. He has held workshops in 18 countries; spoken at Harvard University and Tedx SugarLand; been featured in numerous publications and media outlets, including Fox News, Sky TV, ABC, CBS and NBC; and met with or coached celebrities, billionaires, athletes, royalty and spiritual leaders. Before moving to the United States with his wife and two children, and embarking upon his coaching career, Gupta was an optometrist for 20 years in the UK.

What is the happiness formula?

Happiness is equal to G times G times G. The first G is, you have to give—your time, your energy, your love, your commitment, your joy, your gifts, your money—without wanting anything in return. The second G is, you have to be grateful for what you have and not focus on what you don't have. The third G is, you have to grow emotionally, physically, spiritually, financially and mentally. What's beautiful about this formula is that any time you feel low or upset, one of the three Gs has drastically dropped down. All you have to do is work out which of them it is. Do I need to give, grow or be grateful? And that takes away all of the overwhelm.

Can you describe what you mean by giving?

It could be a smile, a thank-you, a compliment or opening the door for someone. There are two types of people on the planet: ones that make you happy when they enter a room and ones that make you happy when they leave a room. When you give authentically, all the pain and suffering you're going through disappears, because you disappear. Your problems disappear and it's impossible to be upset when you authentically give because you're focusing on someone else. In the moment you give, you receive endorphins, the person receiving that act of kindness or gift receives endorphins, the person observing that act of kindness receives endorphins, the person sharing the act of kindness receives endorphins and the person receiving that shared act of kindness receives endorphins, so it goes a long way.

Can you explain the gratitude component?

When was the last time you thanked your hands for everything that they've done for you? What have you done to reward your heart and to make sure that it's working properly? Our bodies are miracles, and we have much to be grateful for.

What is your definition of growth, and how do we go about achieving it?

Growth can be emotional, physical, spiritual, mental or financial. So it's improving mental capabilities, working on your emotions, working on being worthy or lovable, working on being the best version of you. Are you physically healthy? Are you hydrating? Are you taking your supplements? Are you exercising? And spiritually, it's about being a beautiful soul, having a great vibrational energy. You don't have to go to church for that.

Ultimately, it all boils down to one thing: awareness. Awareness gives you clarity; clarity gives you focus; focus gives you action; action gives you results; and results give you momentum, which gives you everything. You cannot be joyous, healthy or in love without awareness, and most people

don't have the awareness; they're numb or in a funk or just comfortable.

How do you define awareness, and how can we be more aware?

Awareness is a discipline we have to practice, a muscle. To remind yourself to be more aware, you can put a Post-it note with the word "awareness" on your computer, or a rubber band on your wrist or a sock in your back pocket. You can have your phone ring every two hours as an alarm to remind you to be aware. By putting systems into place, you become aware of being aware, and then you'll start noticing so many things.

Are there mantras you suggest for people?

This is my life. Now I'm in charge. I can handle this. I'm bigger than this. It's not about

me; it's about the difference I make. When I speak, people listen. I am strong. I am powerful. I am kind. I am generous. I am playful. I have integrity. I love people, and people love me. I make a difference. I am love. I am joy. I am a free spirit. I'm ready, I'm ready, I'm ready. I love me, I love me, I love me. Today is the day. Today is freedom day. Whoever meets me today is going to benefit by having an incredible time with me.

You can adapt it for yourself, but these are beautiful incantations. Most people have negative incantations like—I'm stupid; I'm not good enough; no one loves me; I'm alone—and they reinforce it, but if you are the light, the darkness will disappear.

Sandra Yeyati is the national editor of Natural Awakenings.

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Chocolate Champions

Benefits of Dark Chocolate and Cacao

by Marlaina Donato



Ancient Mayans prepared beans from the cacao tree, mixed with spices, to make a ceremonial drink that was both sacred and medicinal for them. Today, the market is filled with all sorts of chocolaty treats, but dark chocolate is the low-sugar, nutritional superhero that tickles the tastebuds, boosts the production of mood-enhancing endorphins and delivers flavanols, the antioxidant compounds linked to improved cardiovascular health.

"Chocolate affects us deeply when it comes to our emotions. This is why you get it when you are sad, when you are happy or when you want to show your love. Chocolate doesn't just hit the heartstrings, it's also scientific," says Chris Davis, a private chef and third-generation cocoa devotee from Belmont, North Carolina, who is passionate about the ingredient's sweet and savory potential.

The benefits of dark chocolate can be traced back to its high flavanol content. Researchers have discovered that this antioxidant supports the production of nitric oxide, which is crucial for improving circulation, relaxing blood vessels and lowering blood pressure. Flavanols have also been shown to increase insulin sensitivity, which could reduce the risk of diabetes. Observational studies have shown that indulging in one or two small squares (approximately six grams) of high-quality chocolate daily reduces the risk of mortality from heart disease.

How Chocolate Is Made

Chocolate production involves a complex set of steps, beginning with a cacao pod that is larger than the palm of a hand. The seeds inside this pod are fermented, dried and roasted to create cocoa beans, which are comprised of nibs, cocoa butter and an

outer shell. The nibs are ground and refined to produce cocoa solids, and the shell is ground into cocoa powder. The most beneficial dark chocolate contains 70 to 90 percent cocoa solids with minimal added sugar and no artificial ingredients such as alkali, a flavor enhancer that greatly diminishes flavanol content.

Another nutritional powerhouse is cacao powder, which is made from raw cacao beans and nibs that are fermented and roasted at much lower temperatures than the beans used to make cocoa powder. Although it is more bitter, cacao powder retains more of the bean's original nutritional value, including flavonoids and antioxidants.

Therapeutic Indulgence

"Rich in B vitamins, cacao is full of minerals such as calcium, copper, magnesium,

phosphorus, potassium, copper and zinc," says Sara Ratza, from Tarpon Springs, Florida, a clinical herbalist, health practitioner and author of *Drinking Chocolate: Ancient Traditions for Modern Healing*. "Traditionally, cacao is given to help raise serotonin and level out dopamine, so the Indigenous people share cacao to help those dealing with addictions. Cacao contains hundreds of chemical compounds such as phenethylamine, which is associated with the production of endorphins in the brain."

According to Ratza, theobromine, cacao's main chemical constituent that many confuse for caffeine, has psychological effects that enhance mood. Cacao was an important part of her own emotional healing while she grieved the loss of both her brother and father. During the COVID pandemic, she owned and operated a brick-and-mortar chocolate factory and shop. "The stories of people coming in

and dealing with the trauma of the time is forever ingrained in my heart," she recalls.

Ratza recommends using cacao in the form of nibs or powder from reputable sources. "If your chocolate has transparency of the origin and/or farm, generally you are buying a higher-quality product," she explains. No matter how we revel in dark chocolate or cacao, it is important to opt for the "fair trade" certification that ensures the product was manufactured without child labor and at a fair wage for workers.

The Savory Side

For most of us, our love affair with chocolate is based on its sweet form, but a whole world of gourmet fare celebrates its versatility beyond the candy bar or smoothie. For Davis, "The magic truly happens when applied in a savory way. There is a whole other flavor profile to chocolate before sugar is added to

it when you want to add an earthy depth to a dish or add smokiness to a protein. Almost any sauce I make with wild game, red meat or red wine I will add a bit of cacao to give it the flavor and color that no other ingredient will come close to." One of his favorite Mexican recipes is mole, a rich and savory sauce made from chilis and chocolate.

Opening Our Hearts to Chocolate

Ratza believes that consuming chocolate takes us on a journey, if we allow a little time for it to transport and transform us. "Cacao almost forces you to slow down," she says. "It is important to sit and close your eyes as you sip a cup of cacao or let a piece of chocolate melt on your tongue."

Marlaina Donato is an author, painter and composer. Connect at WildflowersAndWoodsmoke.com.

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Courtesy Chris Davis

CHOCOLATE CHERRY VINAIGRETTE

YIELD: 1 QUART

As a salad dressing, this pairs wonderfully with goat cheese, mozzarella or feta, as well as almonds, pecans, dried cranberries, avocado or beets. It is also delicious drizzled over chicken or white fish, such as grouper.

*1 cup fresh cherries, pitted
3 Tbsp cocoa powder
1 tsp ground cinnamon
2 sprigs fresh thyme
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup apple cider vinegar
2 Tbsp lemon juice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup honey
2 Tbsp whole-grain mustard
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 tsp salt plus more to taste*

Place cherries and honey in a blender and blend until smooth. Add cocoa powder, salt, vinegar, lemon juice, mustard, cinnamon and thyme, and continue blending. Add the oil to the blender in a slow and steady pour until the dressing thickens and fully emulsifies. Will remain fresh for two weeks in the refrigerator.

Recipe courtesy of Chris Davis.



Courtesy Chris Davis

CHOCOLATE-BRAISED SHORT RIBS

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

*2 lb short ribs (boneless or bone-in)
1 celery stalk
1 carrot
1 yellow onion
6 garlic cloves
2 Roma (plum) tomatoes
3 sprigs rosemary
1 cup tomato paste
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cocoa powder
1 bottle red wine
2 to 3 cups chicken stock
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup apple cider vinegar
3 whole cloves
Salt and pepper
Oil for cooking*

Cut up all of the vegetables and set aside.

Generously season all sides of the short ribs with salt and pepper. Heat a large Dutch oven or braising pan and add enough oil to coat the bottom of the pan. Carefully sear all sides of the short ribs until brown. Remove the ribs and set aside. Add the vegetables to the pan. Cover the short ribs with the tomato paste and add the ribs back into the pot on top of the veggies.

Deglaze the pan with the entire bottle of red wine and add enough chicken stock to cover the short ribs. Add cocoa powder, rosemary, cloves and vinegar, and mix until the cocoa powder is dissolved.

Cover the pan and carefully place it in the oven for six hours at 250° F. Once cooked, remove the short ribs and strain the leftover mixture into a bowl to discard the veggies and rosemary sprigs (except carrots, if desired). Add strained liquid and short ribs back into the pot and serve.

Recipe courtesy of Chris Davis.



HEART-OPENING DRINKING CHOCOLATE

YIELD: 1 SERVING

This traditional drinking chocolate does not need milk to froth because the fat from the bean creates the traditional froth at the top of the mug. The main ingredient, cacao paste, contains a higher level of heart-healthy, mood-boosting compounds than found in dark chocolate. For 100 percent pure cacao-bean paste, look for ceremonial-grade cacao, which can be found online or in health food stores.

⅛ to ¼ cup cacao paste

Dash of cinnamon

Dash of cayenne pepper or Cobanero chili pepper

Sprinkle of sea salt

Sweetener to taste (optional)

Put all ingredients in a 12-ounce mug. Add just enough hot water (almost boiling) to cover the cacao. Whisk by hand or with a frother. Once blended, pour additional hot water to fill the cup. Sip slowly with eyes closed and enjoy.

Recipe courtesy of Sara Ratza.

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Stretching for Heart Health

Gentle Movements To Regulate Stress and Circulation

by Maya Whitman

The beauty of stretching is that it doesn't require fancy equipment or hours of dedication. And, it doesn't just improve flexibility and range of motion in the joints and muscles. In just a few minutes, simple stretches can reduce stress and improve heart health and circulation, too.

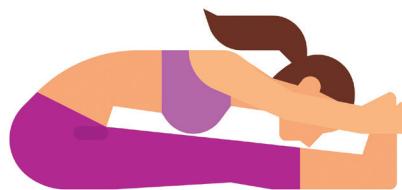
A 2020 meta-analysis published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* suggests that stretching exercises reduce arterial stiffness, resting heart rate and diastolic blood pressure, generally improving the functioning of blood vessels in adults.

A 2020 study published in *The Journal of Physiology* by the University of Milan also found improved blood flow, lower blood pressure and decreased stiffness of the arteries in 54 participants that completed a 12-week stretching program. People with stiff arteries often have high blood pressure, high cholesterol and/or inflammation. Good blood flow reduces arterial wall damage and may lower the risk for heart attacks and strokes.

Try these heart-healthy stretches at least two to three days a week, and repeat each stretch on both sides two to four times.

Seated Forward Bend: Sit on the floor with legs extended straight ahead. Keep the back straight and slowly reach forward for the toes, stretching as far as possible without straining. Hold this position for 20 to 30

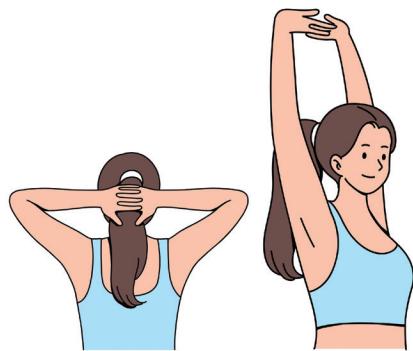
seconds to gently stretch the hamstrings and lower back, while taking deep, controlled breaths to deliver oxygen-rich blood to the heart and muscles. Combining physical movement with mindful breathing reduces stress—a key factor in heart disease.



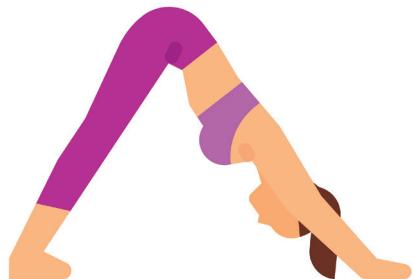
Cat-Cow Stretch: Begin in a tabletop position with hands and knees on the floor. For the “cat” pose, arch the back toward the ceiling while tucking the chin to the chest. Gently shift into the “cow” position by lifting the head while allowing the belly to drop toward the floor. Flow between these two poses for 30 to 40 seconds, focusing on breathing. This stretch improves circulation, relieves tension in the spine and facilitates better blood flow throughout the body. It also enhances the connection between breath and movement, promoting relaxation and a steady heart rate.



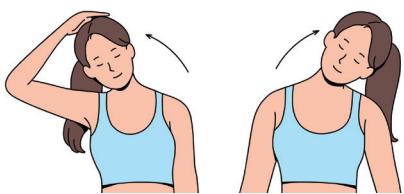
Chest-Opener Stretch: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Clasp hands behind the back and gently lift them up as the chest is opened toward the ceiling. Hold the stretch for 20 to 30 seconds. Opening up the chest is great for posture; it also expands the lungs and improves breathing, boosting oxygen intake, which the heart needs to fuel the body efficiently and maintain healthy circulation.



Downward Dog: Start in a tabletop position. Tuck the toes under and lift the hips toward the ceiling to form an inverted “V” shape. Keep the heels as close to the floor as possible and hold for 30 seconds while breathing deeply. This popular yoga pose stretches the shoulders, hamstrings and calves while promoting blood flow to the heart and brain and relieving tension in the body. It also encourages a calm, yet focused state of mind.



Side Neck Stretch: Sit or stand tall, keeping the shoulders relaxed. Slowly tilt the head toward one shoulder until there is a feeling of a light stretch along the opposite side of the neck. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds and repeat on the other side. Stress often builds up



in the neck and shoulders, which can lead to tension headaches and increased blood pressure. These gentle neck movements will modulate blood pressure and encourage relaxation. Pair the stretch with slow, controlled breathing to calm the nervous system, which can positively impact the heart.



Seated Spinal Twist: Sit on the floor with legs extended. Bend the right knee and place the right foot on the outside of the left thigh. Place the right hand on the floor behind the back. Place the left elbow on the outside of the right knee. Twist gradually to the right while keeping the spine tall. Hold for 20 seconds, then repeat on the other side. This stretch improves spinal flexibility and

stimulates blood flow around the major arteries of the torso. It also massages the internal organs, aiding digestion and indirectly benefiting cardiovascular health.

Standing Hamstring Stretch: Stand with feet hip-width apart. Extend one leg out in front, placing the heel on the ground with the toes pointing upward. Softly bend the other knee and lean forward from the hips, keeping the back straight. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, then switch legs. Stretching the hamstrings enhances blood circulation in the lower body, which can reduce pressure on the heart. This is particularly helpful for anyone that spends long periods sitting during the day.



Maya Whitman is a regular contributor to Natural Awakenings.

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Holistic Lifestyle for Dogs

How Herbs, Mushrooms and the Outdoors Can Help

by Rita Hogan



Caring for a dog holistically involves supporting their body, mind and environment in a balanced, natural way that emphasizes prevention and harmony, rather than merely addressing symptoms. Incorporating herbs and mushrooms into a dog's daily routine, and learning which are most beneficial throughout the year, are effective ways to achieve this balance. The idea is to support immunity and other internal healing mechanisms before problems arise.

It is helpful to adopt a "dog-as-ecosystem" approach, where all aspects of their well-being are seen as interconnected. A dog's organs, nervous system, physical health,

emotional state and environment continually influence one another. For example, stress can trigger a cascade of responses, such as overstimulating the nervous system, leading to digestive upset or a weakened immune system. Similarly, exposure to toxins might contribute to behavioral changes because the nervous system is inextricably related to the liver's role in detoxification. Herbs can address these connections and help maintain balance across a dog's entire ecosystem.

Choosing the Right Herbs and Mushrooms

Because emotional health is closely tied to physical health, calming herbs and

mushrooms can help maintain physical balance by reducing inflammation, supporting digestion and detoxification, and enhancing overall organ function. Here are some of the most effective choices.

- **Passionflower** (*Passiflora incarnata*)
- **Lemon balm** (*Melissa officinalis*)
- **Dandelion root** (*Taraxacum officinale*) also stimulates bile production, which aids in the digestion of fats and proper stool formation.
- **Milk thistle** (*Silybum marianum*). Use

milk thistle seed rather than a standardized extract of silymarin, the active ingredient in milk thistle.

- **Nettle leaf** (*Urtica dioica/urens*) also provides anti-inflammatory vitamins and minerals.
- **Chamomile** (*Matricaria chamomilla*) directly impacts the nervous system by reducing stress-induced gastrointestinal discomfort.
- **Lion's mane** (*Hericium erinaceus*) modulates the immune system, the gut and the nervous system.
- **Calendula** (*Calendula officinalis*) improves coat condition, liver function and helps balance the microbiome.
- **Ashwagandha** (*Withania somnifera*)

Combine dandelion root, milk thistle seeds and nettle leaf in a shatterproof glass container. Pour one cup of almost boiling water over the herbs and cover to let them steep for 15 minutes. Strain, reserving the liquid, and cool. Give one tablespoon for every 20 pounds of body weight. It can be mixed with food.

Stress and Anxiety Herbal Infusion

1 tsp dried dandelion root (*Taraxacum officinale*)

1 tsp dried milk thistle seeds (*Silybum marianum*)

1 tsp dried nettle leaf (*Urtica dioica/urens*)

1 cup boiling water

Combine dandelion root, milk thistle seeds and nettle leaf in a shatterproof glass container. Pour one cup of almost boiling water over the herbs and cover to let them steep for 15 minutes. Strain, reserving the liquid, and cool. Give one tablespoon for every 20 pounds of body weight. It can be mixed with food.

Nature Nurture

Along with a daily infusion of herbs and mushrooms in a dog's diet, spending time in nature will benefit them tremendously. Whether walking in the woods, playing fetch at the park or lying in the grass, this connection to Earth provides grounding, mental stimulation, physical exercise and emotional nourishment. Feeding our furry best friends natural, calming ingredients and spending time with them outdoors is the ideal recipe for a balanced, happy and healthy life.

Rita Hogan is a clinical canine herbalist with more than 20 years of experience and author of *The Herbal Dog: Holistic Canine Herbalism Applications and Practice*. Learn more at CanineHerbalist.com.



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Calendar of Events



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Dexter Winter Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. Features art and crafts, bread and baked goods, jewelry, fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and more. Huron River Methodist Church, 7643 Huron River Dr, Dexter. DexterMarket.com.

Sugar-Tox Seminar – 12pm. The not so sweet truth about sugar. With Kathleen Freydl. Free. Better Health Market, 42875 Grand River Ave, Novi. BetterHealthMarket.com.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Learning Self-Care and Compassion through Nature Connection – 5:30-6:30pm. Through accessible movements, breathing, and mindfulness we will explore our own self-care and compassion as we stand and walk near our green friends. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Observe a Prone Massage – 11-11:45am. Observe a professional LMT faculty demonstrate a half-hour of posterior bodywork. Free. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Superb Owl Sunday – 10am-12pm. A carnival-style event where you can move through the activities at your own pace. Meet some of our resident raptors, dissect owl pellets, and enjoy owl-related crafts and activities. Leave with ideas for making your yard or neighborhood a safer, more welcoming habitat for owls. Leslie Science & Nature Center, 1831 Traver Rd, Ann Arbor. DiscoverScienceAndNature.org.

The Heartfelt Artisan Faire – 10am-2pm. This event is an Art Exhibit solely focused on representing our local artists and their beautiful craft. Each artist will have their own display table and will be on site for any questions. A great opportunity for gift purchasing, self-spoiling and supporting and learning your local artists. Agricole Farm Stop, 118 N Main St, Chelsea. 734-562-2840. Agricole.Events@gmail.com.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Sunrise Nature Hike – 8:30-10am. Come enjoy the brisk morning air as we wander

the preserve and discover winter's hidden wonders. Proper winter gear and binoculars recommended. Kosch Headwaters Preserve, 8170 Ford Rd, Ypsilanti. Pre-registration required: Washtenaw.org.

Card Reading Circle – 6:30-8pm. Step into a world where intuition meets intellect and embark on a journey to deepen your understanding of card reading with Nikki Wisniewski. In this intimate circle, participants of all levels will find a welcoming space to hone their craft under Nikki's expert guidance. \$25. Enlightened Soul Center & Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-358-0218. Register: nmwunveiled.com/card-circle.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Alzheimer's Prevention Straight from the Experts – 12pm. With Kathleen Freydl. Free. Better Health Market, 22250 Michigan Ave, Dearborn. BetterHealthMarket.com.

VegMichigan Ypsilanti Dinner Meetup – 6-7:30pm. Come out and enjoy Plant Based Coneys 100% vegan menu with hot dogs, Mac and cheese, chili and more. Plant Based Coneys, 42 E Cross St, Ypsilanti. VegMichigan.org.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14

My Folky Valentine – 8pm. This year, in honor of our 20th anniversary show, be treated to 10 Michigan-based dynamic duos who are partners in life as well as music. \$20. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Dexter Winter Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. Features art and crafts, bread and baked goods, jewelry, fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and more. Huron River Methodist Church, 7643 Huron River Dr, Dexter. DexterMarket.com.

Alzheimer's Prevention Straight from the Experts – 12pm. With Kathleen Freydl. Free. Better Health Market, 14105 Hall Rd, Shelby Township. BetterHealthMarket.com.

Heal Thyself – 12pm, Novi; 3:30pm, Dearborn. How to build your holistic medicine kits with Dr. Corey, ND. Free. BetterHealthMarket.com.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Alzheimer's Prevention Straight from the Experts – 12pm. With Kathleen Freydl. Free. Better Health Market, 19221 Mack Ave, Grosse Pointe. BetterHealthMarket.com.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Winter Birding – 8-10am. In the crisp morning air, we'll gaze upon nuthatches foraging, a hawk soaring overhead looking for a meal, and enjoy many other daily routines of winter birds. Led by Kelsey Dehring. All levels. Bring binoculars. Spike Preserve, 18700 Grass Lake Rd, Manchester. Pre-registration required: Washtenaw.org.

Leaky Gut Seminar – 12pm. With Kathleen Freydl. Free. Better Health Market, 3344 Secor Rd, Toledo. BetterHealthMarket.com.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

The Ark's 38th Annual Storytelling Festival Family Show – 1pm. Storytelling for the whole family. \$15, \$10 kids/12 and under. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

Release & Renew: A Sound Bath Experience – 6:30-7:30pm. Join Martina Smith for a rejuvenating and immersive experience of deep breathing, meditation and a relaxing sound massage. \$20/Zoom, \$30/advance, \$40/at the door. Enlightened Soul Center & Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-358-0218. Enlightened-SoulCenter.com.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Artist Spotlight: Les Greene – 8pm. A modern-day mix of Little Richard meets James Brown with a twist of Motown. Free; please bring a nonperishable food donation for Food Gatherers. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Alzheimer's Prevention Straight from the Experts – 12pm. With Kathleen Freydl. Free. Better Health Market, 17825 Eureka Rd, Southgate. BetterHealthMarket.com.

PLAN AHEAD

TUESDAY, MARCH 25

Best Prep for Pregnancy – Mar 25-29. An online event and expo featuring more than 30 experts and exhibitors. Gain insights into the root causes of female and male infertility, and learn about a whole-health approach to optimal fertility that protects parents and their babies. Sponsored by KnowEWELL and Natural Awakenings magazine. For more info or to register: BestPrep4Pregnancy.com.

5-Day Immersive Event & Expo Best Prep for Pregnancy

Natural, IVF and Egg-Freezing

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Be Robbing Your Fertility



Aimie Apigan
M.D., MS, MPH
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Tom O'Bryan
DC, CCN, DACBN
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Elisa Song
M.D.
The Prenatal Epigenetic Rx



Lauri Grossman
DC, CCH, RSHom(NA)
Homeopathy for the Emotional Issues
Associated with the IVF Journey



Tracey Gapin
M.D.
Optimization and
Preconception Genetics



Brian Levine
M.D., MS, FACOG
Current Technologies Improve
Fertility Care



DAILY

Ayurveda For Us – Provides online consultations, where clients receive personalized guidance to address chronic health issues and reclaim their vitality. With a focus on diet, herbalism, mental and spiritual healing and lifestyle adjustments, Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to wellness. To schedule a free 30-min discovery call: Calendly.com/d/4dc-gws-6fw/discovery-call. For more info & appt: AyurvedaFor.us.

Herbs for the Southeast Michigan Garden – Learn how to grow and use 20 culinary and medicinal herbs suited for the southeast Michigan garden. Will cover preservation techniques, basic medicine making and crafting herbal oils, poultices, infused honeys and vinegars plus more. Free. More info & register: [Castle Remedies.podia.com](http://CastleRemedies.podia.com).

Introduction to Homeopathy Class – Learn how to choose remedies and how to use them. Class contains nearly 4 hrs of pre-recorded videos. Downloadable resources. \$75. More info & register: [Castle Remedies.podia.com](http://CastleRemedies.podia.com).

Oracle Readings – With Dominique Lavoisier, owner of Mediumship with Angels LLC. Incorporates higher-dimensional energies to offer additional insights and support. Florida-based; all readings done remotely. For appt or more info: MediumshipWithAngels.com.

Holistic Health Consultation – 9am-7pm. Online or phone consultation consultations take about 1 hr and are provided by Certified Xolar Vibronics Holistic Educator and Life Coach Ikaro Phoenix. Be introduced to various techniques, elements or holistic ways of viewing the situation which help the soul to be reeducated and empowered to deal with problems and eliminate them from their root. \$150. For appt: LivingWisdomCoaching.earth.

Pets & Parents Reiki Session – 9am-9pm. Sessions for wellness, critical care and end-of-life transition. Actively experience the use of reiki touch with your pet. Learn additional tips for helping your pet. Virtual 40-min appt. \$20. 231-590-0001. TCDesoto@gmail.com.

The Best Affirmation for You – 10am. Learn about the power of affirmations and how they can bring about positive events and circumstances. Call for a 10-15-min consultation with a licensed professional counselor to pick the best affirmation for you. Purchase an affirmation stone to enhance what you are affirming in your life by having a visible reminder. Free. 734-644-6943. Harmony2c.com/affirmation-stones.

Tiny Lions Lounge & Adoption Center (TLC) – 12-7pm, Wed-Sun. Offers

feline-friendly activities with kittens and cats available to take home. 5245 Jackson Rd, Ste A1, 734-661-3575. TinyLions.org.

Naturally Purifying and Supercharging Your Body Podcast – 7-7:45pm. Matthew Hazen is the owner of Human Consciousness Support, a company that produces a unique nutraceutical product called MasterPeace. Free. BuzzSprout.com/1206776/14236700.

WEEKLY

Yoga with Crysterra Wellness – Variety of classes Tues-Thurs. Cost varies. For schedule & details: CrysterraWellness.com.

Stop Sabotaging Your Self-Care – Christy DeBurton will guide you on a journey of self-discovery to examine the obstacles that stand in the way of you taking better care of yourself. 4-wk self-paced online course. \$79 (regular \$149). Yoga Room, 889 Honey Creek Dr, Ann Arbor. Info@ChristyDeBurton.com. YogaRoomAnnArbor.com/online-courses-self-care.

SUNDAYS

Bach Flower Remedies Level 1 Live Web – 3rd Sun. Learn how to use the 38 Bach flower remedies to help yourself and others conquer fear, worry, overwhelm, low self-esteem, lack of focus, poor concentration, trouble sleeping and more. With Nancy Buono, BFCP, Director of Bach Flower Education. BachFlowerSchool.com.

Hudson Valley Humane Society Rescue Reading – 10am-12pm. Includes humane education lessons, group read-aloud and dog meet-and-greet. Drop-off event. \$10; space limited. HSHV.org/RescueReading.

Clearing Meditation – 11am. 4th Sun. Each person gets one question answered for healing an issue. In person. Troy. RSVP required: 248-789-1980.

Online Meditation from Anywhere – 11am-12pm. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: CelesteZygmont2@yahoo.com or DeepSpring.org.

Sunday Talk with Demo Rinpoche – 11am-12pm. Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, 1129 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-994-3387. JewelHeart.org.

Common Cycle Bike Repair Sessions – 11am-3pm. Learn about bike repair, share tools and build a sense of community. Volunteers ready to assist with maintenance issues or personal projects. 416 W Huron St, Ste 11, Ann Arbor. 734-619-0907. CommonCycle.org.

Critter House Open Hours – 12-3pm. A

great way to get up close and personal with some fascinating animals, all while developing an appreciation for the incredible diversity of the natural world. Suggested donation: \$5/person, \$20/family. Leslie Science & Nature Center, 1831 Traver Rd, Ann Arbor. DiscoverScienceAndNature.org.

Wonder Walks – Thru Mar. 1pm. Also Wed, 5:30pm. Designed for all ages to inspire curiosity and learning from each other through activities that model curiosity and honor nature. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

Inspiring Talk by Mata Yogananda – 7pm. Spiritual talk, pure meditation and silent prayer, with Winged Prayer for all in need at 9pm. Free. Self-Realization Meditation Healing Centre, 7187 Drumheller, Bath. 517-641-6201. SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

MONDAYS

Weekday Morning Online Meditation – Mon-Fri. 7:30-8am. Insight Meditation Ann Arbor offers a 30-min online group sitting via Zoom. Free; donations gratefully accepted. InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org.

Beginner Tai Chi – 10-11:15am. A series of postures linked together in a fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). \$195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Mindful Dexter – 12-12:30pm. Last Mon. A short 30-min guided meditation that is a simple and practical mindfulness tune-up that you can access from wherever you are. Zoom. Tinyurl.com/mindfuldexter.

Soul Power Mystic Arts – 5pm. 2nd Mon & Wed. Re-claim the real you, hear your evolutionary calling and cultivate the nature mystic within through 4 retreats, individual training, self-acceptance process, nature qigong, plant ally ceremonies and body-ecology psychology. Sliding scale. Mother Bear Sanctuary, 20470 Barton, Pinckney. 734-796-6690. MotherBearSanctuary.com.

Meaningful Mondays – 8pm. SevaLight Retreat Centre warmly welcomes everyone, of all faiths, meditation practices and traditions, to join us virtually. Will gather on video conference sharing in song/chants and inspiring readings from Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharmaji's writings, followed by Pure Meditation and silent prayer. Free. Email by 10am any Mon to receive the info about how to

join by video: Info@SelfRealizationCentre Michigan.org.

TUESDAYS

Senior Discount Tuesdays: Castle Remedies – Customers over the age of 65 can receive a 10% discount on their in-store purchases. In the Parkway Center, 2345 S Huron Pkwy, Ann Arbor. 734-973-8990. CastleRemedies.com.

Online Meditation from Anywhere – 9-9:30am. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: CelesteZygmont2@yahoo.com or DeepSpring.org.

WEDNESDAYS

Wonder Walks – Thru Mar. 5:30pm. See Sun listing. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

Get the Most from Your DNA Test – 6-8pm. Learn what you can do with your results and what additional opportunities are available for discovering your genetic genealogy. Understand the science, how to find information and how to share that information. Course 39651. \$59. Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E Huron River Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-677-5060. wccnet.edu/noncredit.

THURSDAYS

Move With Us: Trager Mentastics – Thru May 1. 10-10:45am. 1st Thurs. This is a gentle form of movement that is low key, focused on the nervous system releasing restrictive patterns. \$12 cash. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural

Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. Naturopathic SchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Class Observation – 11-11:30am. Also Fri. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. Naturopathic SchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Qigong: Basics – 11:15am-12:15pm. Class introduces participants to basic self-care stretches, breathing, meditations and self-acupressure for reducing muscle tension, increasing mindfulness, and revitalization. \$180. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Beginner Tai Chi – 6-7:15pm. A series of postures linked together in fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). \$195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Thursday Hills of Ann Arbor – 6:30pm. We ride some of the best hills A2 has to offer. A/B/C: 10-40 miles. Start at Wheels in Motion, 3402 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor. WheelsInMotion.us.

Thursday Evening Silent Meditation – 6:30-8:15pm. With Insight Meditation Ann Arbor. Free; donations gratefully accepted. Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W Liberty St, Ann Arbor. 734-994-4455. InsightMeditation AnnArbor.org.

Mindful Dexter – 7:30-8pm. 3rd Thurs. A short 30-min guided meditation that is a simple and practical mid-month mindfulness tune-up that you can access from

wherever you are. Zoom. Tinyurl.com/mindfuldexter.

FRIDAYS

Natural Turmeric Indian Wedding Facial for All – 9am-6pm. Design combines traditional ingredients like turmeric, used in Indian weddings for skin beautification, with modern machines that enhance the overall experience. Mahabir Wellness, 1640 Haslett Rd, Ste 100, Haslett. 517-325-9954. MahabirWellness.com.

Class Observation – 11-11:30am. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. Naturopathic SchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Online: Prayer Power Hour – 12-12:30pm. Prayer changes things. Our goal is simple: to love you, pray for you and introduce you to our loving Creator, the Great Healer. Free. Tinyurl.com/PrayerPowerHour.

SATURDAYS

Mindful Dexter – 9:30-10:30am. 2nd Sat. Includes a 25-30-min guided meditation, a few minutes of silent meditation, followed by time for comments/questions and a discussion on a mindfulness topic. Dexter Library, 3255 Alpine St, Dexter. 734-476-8474. Tinyurl.com/mindfuldexter.

Pregnancy, Childbirth, Postpartum and Baby Classes – 6-7pm. Classes are held virtually online led by our top AID instructors utilizing state of the art visual aids and activities to keep it fun and engaging while presenting the latest evidenced based material on each topic. \$35/class. Childbirth-Classes.com.

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Biological Dentist

ANN ARBOR'S DENTIST
Dr. W. K. Dobracki, DDS
606 W Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor, 48103
734-747-6400
DrDobracki@AnnArborsDentist.com
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Passionate about holistic care while utilizing Bio-Compatible materials and lasers. Our patients can elect to be free from fluoride, mercury and other harmful metals. Filling materials are tooth colored and both BPA & Bis-GMA free. We offer natural oral health products using fine essential oils, and free of gluten and preservatives. See ad page 3.



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Energy Enhancement & Wellness

MIRACULOUS ENERGIES
(A Private Membership Association)
MiraculousEnergiesAssociation@gmail.com
517-599-4949
MiraculousEnergies.com



Miraculous Energies
Energy Lounge

multiple bio-active life-enhancing energy fields, including scalar waves and a morphogenic energy field, also known as scalar vortex. When combined with light as biophotons, it can interface with the body's DNA matrix and promote wellness. See ad page 9.

Holistic Doctor

DR. MALCOLM SICKELS, M.D.
210 Little Lake Dr, Ste 10, Ann Arbor
734-332-9936
DrSickels.com



Malcolm Sickels earned his M.D. from the University of Michigan, where he taught fellow medical students about different approaches to health. Board certified in Family Medicine and Holistic Medicine, he is in solo practice on the west side of Ann Arbor. Learn more at Dr. Sickels.com. See ads, pages 8 and 11.

Holistic Mental Wellness

CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE COUNSELING

Karen Kerr, LMSW
2010 Hogback Road, Ste. 6E, Ann Arbor
734-660-5610
Karen8Kerr@gmail.com
KarenPKerr.com



In offering a caring, collaborative and supportive experience, I draw upon a holistic approach with a rich variety of practices designed to deepen awareness, uplift mood, manage stress and develop a stronger sense of self-worth, purpose, connection and joy in life.

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In the Parkway Center
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Serving Michigan for nearly 40 years. Castle Remedies offers over 1,000 homeopathic remedies as well as herbs, essential oils, flower essences, books, unique gifts and jewelry. We carry top-tier nutritional supplement brands such as Metagenics, Ortho Molecular, Xymogen, Integrative Therapeutics, Karuna, NOW, and more. Classes available online. See ad page 13.

Lymphatic Bodywork/ Reiki

ELEVATE MIND & BODYWORK

Sarah Girard BS, LMT
1140 N. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor
SarahGirard.lmt@gmail.com
Elevate.MassageTherapy.com



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Mold Testing & Remediation

MOLDPRO

John Du Bois, CMI, CMR, CCMI
247 W. Main Street, Milan
734-439-8800 • MoldProllc.com



MoldPro offers chemical-free mold remediation, independent certified mold testing, inspection and consultation services all over SE Michigan specializing in mold biotoxin illness clients.

Nature-Oriented Meeting Space

MICHIGAN FRIENDS CENTER AT FRIENDS LAKE COMMUNITY

7748 Clark Lake Road, Chelsea
734-475-1892
MFCenter.org/rent



We offer the holistic community a nature-oriented meeting space for workshops, meetings, counseling, yoga, youth groups and family gatherings. Main room accommodates 100, with two smaller classrooms and kitchen facilities. Hiking trails. Weekend rates range from \$200-\$400, additional for extensive grounds use, camping. See ad page 11.

Neurofeedback

NEW MOON NEURO

105 E. Middle Street, Chelsea
734-210-1922
NewMoonNeuro.com



Give your horse or pet the benefit of both worlds with a combination of Western medical knowledge

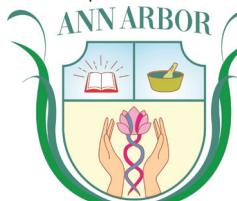
diction, TBI, migraines, pain issues and more - for the entire family. See ad inside front cover.

Located within AL-CHEMY Holistic Collective, New Moon Neuro is the area's only IASIS Micro Current Neurofeedback Provider. Find lasting support for anxiety, depression, ADHD, insomnia, OCD, ad-

School/Education

ANN ARBOR SCHOOL OF MASSAGE, HERBAL & NATURAL MEDICINE

734-769-7794
NSHAAAssociates@gmail.com
NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net



Massage therapy training is a one-year program that fulfills the 717-hour, state-licensed professional training with the required 80 hours of clinical internship. The rate for scheduled, Tuesday through Friday appointments at our student massage clinic is \$50/hr.

Smoking Cessation

FREE AT LAST! HYPNOSIS Center - A Joyful Journey

734-883-8775



Stop smoking in one visit. Afraid it's going to be too painful or too difficult? Our unique specialized and proven system makes it easy. Become a happy and permanent non-smoker today. See ad inside front cover.



Tai Chi & Qigong

PEACEFUL DRAGON SCHOOL

1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor
734-741-0695
PeacefulDragonSchool.com



Tai chi promotes relaxation, is a meditation in motion and is known for increasing balance. Qigong means energy. This class includes Wild Goose Form, stretching, meditation and self-acupressure.

Weight Loss

FREE AT LAST! HYPNOSIS CENTER - A JOYFUL JOURNEY

734-883-8775



Lose weight now with hypnosis. Achieve permanent positive life and habit changes through our safe, rapid and effective system. Tap the potential of your mind to create the health and vitality you've always wanted. See ad inside front cover.

Wellness Centers

CRYSTERRA WELLNESS

3173 Baker Rd, Dexter
734-649-1849
CrysterraWellness.com



Ancient inspirations for modern well-being. Supporting you and your wellness journey every step of the way with reflexology, reiki, lithotherapy and yoga.

THRIVE! WELLNESS CENTER

148 S. Industrial Dr. Saline
734-470-6766
Thrive-Wellness-Center.com



Shannon Roznay, DC, specializes in Nutrition Response Testing and Activator Chiropractic. Thrive! also carries natural foods, skin and home products. See ad page 21.



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- Dallas, TX
- Daytona/Volusia/Flagler Counties, FL
- Detroit/Wayne County, MI
- Fairfield & Southern Litchfield Counties, CT
- Gainesville/Ocala/The Villages, FL
- Grand Traverse Region/Northern Michigan
- Greater Ann Arbor, MI
- Greater Lansing, MI
- Greater Oakland, Macomb, Livingston, Genesee, MI
- Gulf Coast, Alabama/Mississippi
- Hartford/Tolland, CT - Coming soon
- Houston, TX
- Hudson County, NJ
- Jacksonville/St. Augustine, FL
- Lancaster/Berks, PA
- Lehigh Valley, PA
- Long Island, NY
- Milwaukee, WI
- Monmouth/Ocean Counties, NJ
- Naples/Fort Myers, FL
- New Haven, CT
- New London/Windham, CT - Coming soon
- New York City, NY
- North Central New Jersey
- North New Jersey
- Northwest Florida
- Palm Beach, FL
- Philadelphia, PA
- Phoenix, AZ
- Pittsburgh, PA
- Rhode Island
- Richmond, VA
- Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and DeSoto Counties, FL
- South Central Pennsylvania
- South Jersey, NJ
- Southeast North Carolina
- Space & Treasure Coast, FL
- Tampa, FL
- Tucson, AZ
- Twin Cities, MN
- Westchester/Putnam/Dutchess, NY
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This information is not intended as an offer to sell, or the solicitation of an offer to buy, a franchise. It is for informational purposes only. Currently, the following states regulate the offer and sale of franchises: California, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. If you are a resident of one of these states, we will not offer you a franchise unless and until we have complied with applicable pre-sale registration and disclosure requirements in your jurisdiction.



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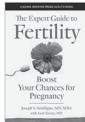


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